

**Committee on Resources**  
**Subcommittee on Water & Power**

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**Witness Statement**

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Statement  
of  
Kathleen Clarke  
Executive Director  
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to the

Subcommittee on Water And Power  
Committee on Resources  
United States House of Representatives

Supporting Enactments of H. R. 2348  
Authorizing the Bureau of Reclamation  
to Provide Cost-Sharing

for the

Endangered Fish Recovery Implementation Programs  
For the  
Upper Colorado and San Juan River Basins.

Submitted on October 21, 1999

This testimony supports the enactment of H.R. 2348, authorizing appropriations for the Endangered Fish Recovery Implementation Programs for the Upper Colorado and San Juan River Basins

Mr. Chairman and members of the Water and Power Subcommittee, I am here representing the states that are signatory to the Endangered Fishes Recovery Implementation Program for the Upper Colorado River Basin and the sister program on the San Juan River Basin. I urge your support for H.R. 2348. This legislation and the associated recovery program are vital to the interests of Utah and the other Upper

Colorado River Basin states of Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming. The Endangered Fishes Recovery Implementation Programs (RIP) for the Upper Colorado and San Juan River basins are key to continuing to allow the states to use and develop our Colorado River Compact apportioned waters. Living as we do in one of the driest regions of the country, the citizens of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming, fully appreciate the value of the precious waters of the Colorado River which sustain our communities. We also appreciate the natural beauty of the Colorado River Basin and the importance of its natural biological resources. Ongoing implementation of the RIP in these basins has allowed us to reconcile the two seemingly opposite values of water development and restoration and maintenance of habitat for the four endangered fishes:

- 1) Colorado pikeminnow,
- 2) humpback chub,
- 3) razorback sucker and
- 4) bonytail chub.

The cooperative Recovery Implementation Program on the Upper Colorado River began with a cooperative agreement signed in 1988 by the governors of Colorado, Wyoming and Utah, and the Bureau of Reclamation, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Western Area Power Administration. The San Juan recovery program is a similar effort involving Colorado, New Mexico and the Bureau of Reclamation, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Western Area Power Administration and Bureau of Indian Affairs. These programs also are strongly supported by the power users, local water users and a number of environmental organizations as the only viable way of meeting the mandates of the Endangered Species Act while adhering to the terms of the compacts, treaties and legislation included in what is know as the Law of the River. The Upper Colorado River Endangered Fishes Recovery Implementation Program presently serves as the reasonable and prudent alternative for 508 small and large water development projects in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming for section 7 consultations under the ESA. I would add that the goals of the Recovery Program go beyond simply avoiding jeopardy to the current populations of the endangered fishes. Rather, we seek to increase the populations to the point of de-listing.

De-listing will take time, effort and resources but current data indicate we are on the right path. The most recent RIP progress update from the USFWS indicates that populations of the Colorado pikeminnow are increasing. The humpback chub are doing well and the razorback suckers are beginning to show signs of increased successful recruitment in the wild. Additional emphasis is being placed on the bonytail chub as the other fishes continue to improve.

Much of this progress is the result of information developed from the past 10 years of research in the program. This research also has resulted in the re-operation of federal mainstem reservoirs in the Upper Basin. Many important questions concerning the biological needs of the fishes have been answered by the research component of the program but much remains to be done. Now is the time to put this knowledge on the ground. This will take resources from the local power and water users, states and federal government.

We, the states and other non-federal program participants, are committed to meeting our resource obligations as outlined in the legislation. This amounts to more than 50 percent of the total remaining cost of implementation. To make recovery a reality, though, requires equal commitment from the federal government. Passage of H.R. 2348 will demonstrate this.

Program participants invested a great deal of time and energy developing and reaching agreement on the language presently contained in H.R. 2348 but several minor wording changes have collectively been

developed by consensus of the program participants since the legislation was introduced. We understand that Congressman Jim Hansen from Utah will offer these amendments for your consideration and request the Subcommittee incorporate these amendments during markup of the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify concerning this important legislation. The states of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming urge you to favorably report this legislation with amendments for passage by Congress.

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